A RADIO ZINE

S I G N A L S #3

SIGNALS no. 3

a zine created by DJ Frederick.

In this issue:

Types of radio stations
The history of WUMS
Food not bombs liberation radio
The amateur radio service
Bozo Texino????
The Pirates Week Podcast
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Welcome to **SIGNALS No.3**

In this zine series we explore pirate radio & pirate stations, shortwave listening, finding magic in radio signals again and reclaiming our airwaves from corporate controlled media.

Less than 100 copies of each issue are printed. I try to publish one or two issues per year. Signals is a non-linear reading journey. Your comments, thoughts, articles, art, etc would be welcomed for future issues. Please share this zine with your friends!

PREVIOUSLY READ IN SIGNALS:

What exactly is shortwave radio? Shortwave frequencies start just above the AM band (medium wave) at 1730 kHz and go up to 30,000 kHz. In the radio spectrum, shortwave is far below frequency modulation (FM) which starts around 87,500 kHz (87.5).

Pirate radio is any broadcast on any frequency that is not sanctioned or regulated by the government of the country of origin (in the USA that's the Federal Communications Commission). People who break the 'rules' governing broadcasting such as playing music on CB or amateur radio frequencies are called pirates.

In North America there are pirates all over the radio spectrum—AM, FM, and shortwave.

Some types of radio stations in the US

Commercial Radio – stations that depend on revenue from commercials or leased airtime for their financial survival. Most commercial stations are generally formatted to play mass produced, corporate promoted rock and pop music and feature inane DJs who try to hold listener's attention by whatever means possible. In my opinion the majority of commercial stations consist of mindless corporate drivel or endless conservative talk shows, however there **are** some unique and wonderful commercial stations in the US such as KYOU, an AM station in San Francisco that broadcasts a cool variety of podcasts. If you know of any great commercial stations or shows I would love to hear from you about them.

Public Radio – usually a non-profit locally run station that carries programming from National Public Radio and other Public Radio networks. These stations sometimes have some local focus and are funded through corporate underwriting and financial donations from listeners. There is typically very little "public" in public radio, it is tightly controlled professionally produced & censored programming for middle of the road audiences. Still, public radio brought us *This American Life* so there **is** hope! The **Pacifica Network** www.pacifica.org is a small but lively free speech, listener funded and listener directed network with a rich 60 year history of promoting progressive culture. Pacifica was the original inspiration for NPR.

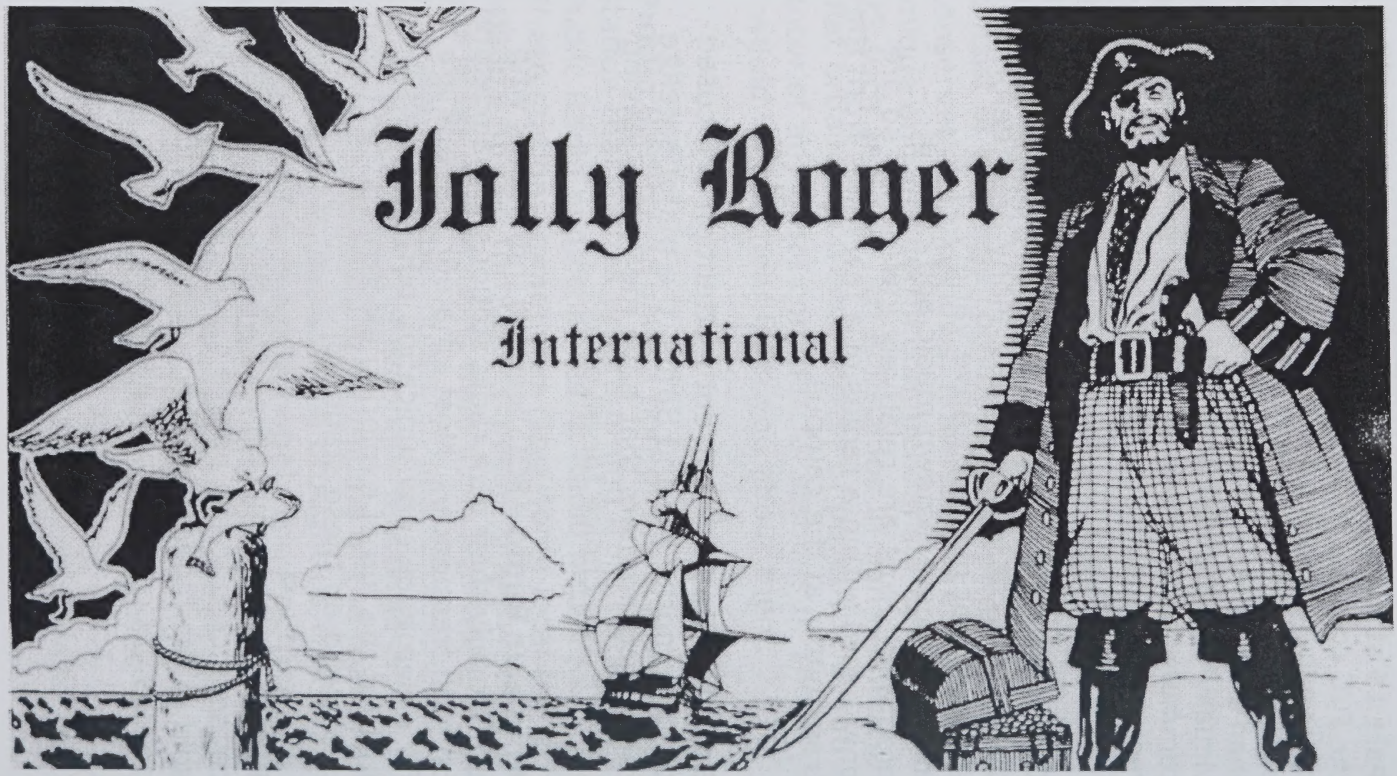
Part 15 stations broadcast with such low power that the FCC does not require that they be licensed. They must adhere to strict power output and antenna guidelines. Their signals usually travel less than a mile under best conditions but often these individually owned stations provide a quality community based radio service to those within reception range.

College Radio – stations of varying formats run by students at local colleges. Many are freeform stations that play a creative variety of indie and lesser known music and cultural programs. Most are relatively low-power so are only heard within a radius of a few miles from the transmitter at the campus.

Satellite Radio – currently attention is focused on behemoths XM and Sirius, the major satellite radio programmers that have merged ... leaving us with less choice for all of us.

Amateur Radio—FCC licensed individuals who are literally their own radio stations, broadcasting on high frequencies. Most amateur stations are for emergency communication purposes and also just for the fun of exploring electronics. No music is allowed on these stations.

Pirate Radio—unlicensed stations, usually because access to the people's airwaves has been sold to the highest bidder, so how can community groups get on the air legally? Not easily.


Jolly Roger
International

Low Power FM – These are community stations that broadcast with 100 watts or less, and are run by non-profit groups. Each LPFM station is unique and many reflect issues of local interest by allowing local citizens access to the airwaves. Some are automated with music or syndicated programs and others are religious in nature. Availability for new FCC licensed LPFM stations has been almost non existent since 2005.

Traveler Information Stations – low power government run AM / FM stations that give listeners/travelers specific information on local weather, traffic, parks, and information. These stations can be found at airports, historic sites, national parks, etc.

Weather Stations broadcast on specific frequencies through the National Weather Service. They require a special weather radio to hear their signals.

Shortwave Stations – there are a handful of stations that broadcast on shortwave frequencies in the US. Most are completely religious but a handful of stations also broadcast music and information programs including:

WBCQ www.wbcq.com
WWCR www.wwcr.com
WRMI www.wrmi.net

Pirate Radio History:
WUMS 1925 – 1980

Proctorville Ohio is a community located at the southernmost point of Ohio along the Ohio River, across the river from Huntington, West Virginia. Proctorville is the home of one of the earliest American pirate radio stations – WUMS. The federal government worked for decades to shut down the station to no avail. Captain Paul Thomas had a reputation for being an exceptional ferryman on the Ohio River. He operated a busy ferry schedule between Proctorville and Huntington for years. At times floods disrupted ferry service and the shipping activity along the river, not to mention creating hardship in local communities.

In 1925, Capt. Thomas's son, Dave Thomas, came up with an idea for utilizing radio during the floods. His station, using the call letters WUMS, took to the airwaves on November 16th that year transmitting flood information, music, news and advice to area residents about managing the flooding emergency. The WUMS studios were located on one of Capt. Thomas's ferries. WUMS reportedly stood for both "We're Unknown Mystery Station" and "We're Unlicensed Marine Station."

For a few years, no one knew the station's location or who the operator was. The government refused to license even though Dave Thomas applied to become a legal broadcaster.

By the early 1930's WUMS started broadcasting openly and was a well known "outlaw" station. WUMS could be heard on 1560 kHz (regular broadcasts) and 2004 kHz (floods and emergencies) transmitting with only a few watts. Dave Thomas also took the operations of WUMS mobile, broadcasting from churches, schools, theaters, and local events.

Tensions with the FCC continued throughout WUMS's history. In 1942, after the FCC had denied WUMS a license yet again, Dave Thomas wrote: "One of the first rules of the FCC is that radio be used for safety of life and property, and a few more things that should / would grant a permit to anyone who is working emergency times for no personal gain and has saved thousands of dollars for others during past floods. I have always tried to play ball with you and seek permission so that I could operate in a legal way. I do not want to operate as an outlaw station but when floods are raging over the Ohio Valley this station will come on the air. I've asked for nothing impossible for you to grant and I've asked for nothing personal except to serve the people of this locality."

The federal government took Dave Thomas to court in 1948. After an initial conviction of operating without a license, upon appeal the FCC lost the case and charges were dismissed. As a consequence of legal concerns, after 1948 WUMS operated less frequently and stopped sending out advance notice of broadcasts.

However, as late as 1980 Dave Thomas wrote that the station was still alive, just rarely on the air. The story of WUMS is a chronicle of courage, advocacy, perseverance and standing up to a government that doesn't want us serving our communities through the airwaves unless we are subject to federal approval and control. Why? What is the FCC afraid of? There have been incidents of serious gas leaks, fires, and other emergencies that what remains of local media didn't even bother to report. There are rural and suburban communities where there is no local media whatsoever. The internet could be an incredible local news resource yet even in 2009 not everyone is or wants to be connected to the internet. Not everyone owns or wants to own a television. And not many television stations broadcast to or for the local community. Radio is one of the most effective methods of communication and community building, along with zines and non-commercial local papers. Radio is inexpensive, portable, can be used anywhere. Dave Thomas showed the way for broadcasters to serve their communities, license or no license. Long live mystery stations!

Origins of Food Not Bombs Liberation Radio in San Francisco

by C.T. Lawrence Butler

The first Food Not Bombs (FNB) collective originated in Cambridge, MA in the early 1980s. The second FNB was established in San Francisco in May of 1988 following the "Reclaim the Test Site" nonviolent direct action at the Nevada Nuclear Weapons Test Site in March. By August, the San Francisco Police were arresting FNB activists for the simple act of giving out free vegetarian food in Golden Gate Park (at the foot of Haight Street across from a McDonalds in the Haight-Asbury district).

From 1988 to 1991, FNB was repeatedly attacked by the San Francisco Police. This resulted in hundreds of arrests and worldwide media coverage. The problem with all the media attention was that the only story in the mainstream press was the police/state's side of the situation and the complete exclusion of our point of view or reasons for

Then, the First Gulf War broke out and a radical engineer by the name of Stephen Dunifer, who was outraged by the lies in the mainstream media about the war (sound familiar?), built a low power radio transmitter and hauled a car battery and radio equipment up into the hills of Berkeley and started broadcasting. This radical nonviolent direct action became known as the pirate radio station Radio Free Berkeley.

Across the bay in San Francisco, two FNB activists, Keith McHenry and Richard Edmonson, heard about Radio Free Berkeley and thought it was just what FNB needed to get our side of the story out to the public. They approached Stephen and talked him into taking on Richard as an assistant with the goal of teaching Richard everything he needed to know to build and operate a pirate radio station for a FNB. Within a few weeks, Keith and Richard were broadcasting from the Twin Peaks of San Francisco with the FNB Liberation Radio.

Ultimately, as the FNB movement spread, we spawned a pirate radio movement throughout the US. The FCC had Richard arrested for broadcasting the truth without a license. His civil suit resulted in a decision in his favor and the FCC, for a time, stopped it's attacks on low-powered "pirate" radio stations and made it easier to get a broadcast license for community groups.

San Francisco Liberation Radio is still broadcasting, although now it is by streaming on the Internet rather than out of the back of a van up in the hills. The URL is: www.liberationradio.net

C.T. Butler is one of the original FNB collective members along with Keith McHenry way back in Cambridge, MA in 1980. Currently, he is continuing to encourage radical grassroots media by starting a FNB collective in Nairobi, Kenya whose media is a 4-color manual screen press which C.T. helped build in January 2007 and traveled there in February 2008 to teach the FNB volunteers there how to operate it.

The Slow Media Manifesto by Stockdorf and Bonn

The first decade of the 21st century, the so-called 'naughties', has brought profound changes to the technological foundations of the media landscape. The key buzzwords are networks, the Internet and social media. In the second decade, people will not search for new technologies allowing for even easier, faster and low-priced content production. Rather, appropriate reactions to this media revolution are to be developed and integrated politically, culturally and socially. The concept "Slow", as in "Slow Food" and not as in "Slow Down", is a key for this. Like "Slow Food", Slow Media are not about fast consumption but about choosing the ingredients mindfully and preparing them in a concentrated manner. Slow Media are welcoming and hospitable. They like to share.

1. Slow Media are a contribution to sustainability. Sustainability relates to the raw materials, processes and working conditions, which are the basis for media production. Exploitation and low-wage sectors as well as the unconditional commercialization of user data will not result in sustainable media. At the same time, the term refers to the sustainable consumption of Slow Media.

More Slow Media Manifesto by Stockdorf and Bonn

2. Slow media promote Monotasking. Slow Media cannot be consumed casually, but provoke the full concentration of their users. As with the production of a good meal, which demands the full attention of all senses by the cook and his guests, Slow Media can only be consumed with pleasure in focused alertness.

3. Slow Media aim at perfection. Slow Media do not necessarily represent new developments on the market. More important is the continuous improvement of reliable user interfaces that are robust, accessible and perfectly tailored to the media usage habits of the people.

4. Slow Media make quality palpable. Slow Media measure themselves in production, appearance and content against high standards of quality and stand out from their fast-paced and short-lived counterparts – by some premium I nterface or by an aesthetically inspiring design.

5. Slow Media advance Prosumers, i.e. people who actively define what and how they want to consume and produce. In Slow Media, the active Prosumer, inspired by his media usage to develop new ideas and take action, replaces the passive consumer. This may be shown by marginals in a book or animated discussion about a record with friends. Slow Media inspire, continuously affect

perceptible years later.

6. Slow Media are discursive and dialogic. They long for a counterpart with whom they may come in contact. The choice of the target media is secondary. In Slow Media, listening is as important as speaking. Hence 'Slow' means to be mindful and approachable and to be able to regard and to question one's own position from a different angle.

7. Slow Media are Social Media. Vibrant communities or tribes constitute around Slow Media. This, for instance, may be a living author exchanging thoughts with his readers or a community interpreting a late musician's work. Thus Slow Media propagate diversity and respect cultural and distinctive local features.

8. Slow Media respect their users. Slow Media approach their users in a self-conscious and amicable way and have a good idea about the complexity or irony their users can handle. Slow Media neither look down on their users nor approach them in a submissive way.

9. Slow Media are distributed via recommendations not advertising: the success of Slow Media is not based on an overwhelming advertising pressure on all

colleagues or family. A book given as a present five times to best friends is a good example.

10. Slow Media are timeless: Slow Media are long-lived and appear fresh even after years or decades. They do not lose their quality over time but at best get some patina that can even enhance their value.

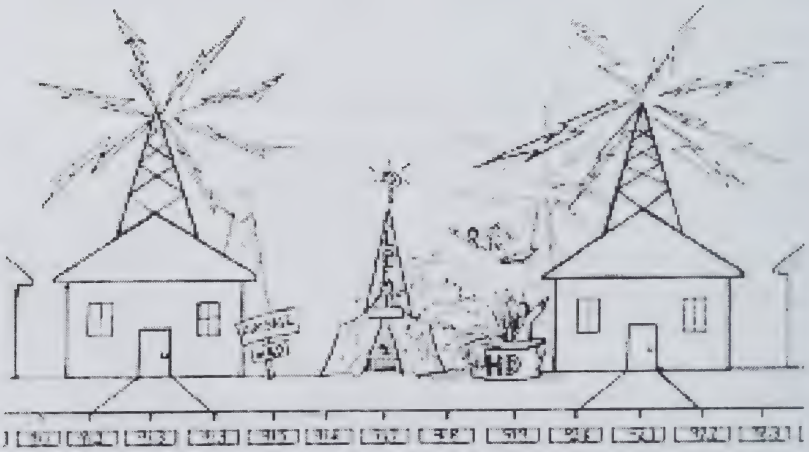
11. Slow Media are auratic: Slow Media emanate a special aura. They generate a feeling that the particular medium belongs to just that moment of the user's life. Despite the fact that they are produced industrially or are partially based on industrial means of production, they are suggestive of being unique and point beyond themselves.

12. Slow Media are progressive not reactionary: Slow Media rely on their technological achievements and the network society's way of life. It is because of the acceleration of multiple areas of life, that islands of deliberate slowness are made possible and essential for survival. Slow Media are not a contradiction to the speed and simultaneousness of Twitter, Blogs or Social Networks but are an attitude and a way of making use of them.

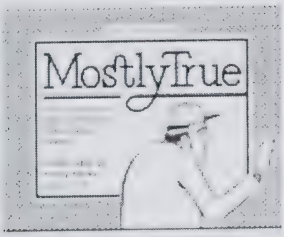
More Slow Media Manifesto by Stockdorf and Bonn

13. Slow Media focus on quality both in production and in reception of media content: Craftsmanship in cultural studies such as source criticism, classification and evaluation of sources of information are gaining importance with the increasing availability of information.

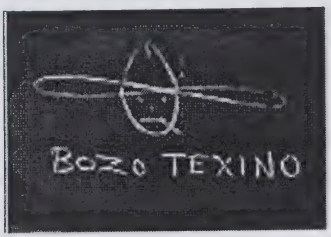
14. Slow Media ask for confidence and take their time to be credible. Behind Slow Media are real people. And you can feel that.



Discoveries and Parallels



I recently stumbled onto the curious phenomenon of railroad graffiti through reading Bill Daniel's book Mostly True (Microcosm Publishing ISBN 978-0-9788665-2-5) and watching his film documentary *Who is Bozo Texino*. Daniels is a tour guide into the world of railroad workers, rail raiders, hoboes and artists such as the enigmatic Colossus of Roads & the legendary Bozo Texino himself.



Railroad artists leave line drawings on box cars sometimes with dates, phrases, and their railroad nicknames like "Wat ed Lou" or "The Rambler".

More **Discoveries and Parallels**

This graffiti isn't the elaborate colorful wash of spray paint found on railroad cars and highway underpasses, this is refined traditional art that harkens back several generations. In some cases as older artists (such as the original drawer of Bozo Texino) aged and died, younger enthusiasts assumed their monikers in homage and carried on the tradition.

Researching this world of graffiti was like rediscovering the excitement of pirate radio which led me to ponder: How is railroad graffiti and pirate radio related?

Pirate radio is ephemeral. Electromagnetic waves transmit into the ionosphere, bounce back down to earth for a brief period of time, and then are gone. Most pirate broadcasts last for a few minutes to (rarely) a few hours. Railroad graffiti is transient in the same way – susceptible to the elements of wind and rain which makes them temporary at best. A chalk drawing sketched today may be eroded beyond visibility tomorrow.

Both are "unauthorized crimes of passion". Broadcasting without a license is illegal. Drawing on railroad cars is a federal offense. Yet people's creative expression and freedom of speech can not be controlled by outdated and inappropriate regulations.

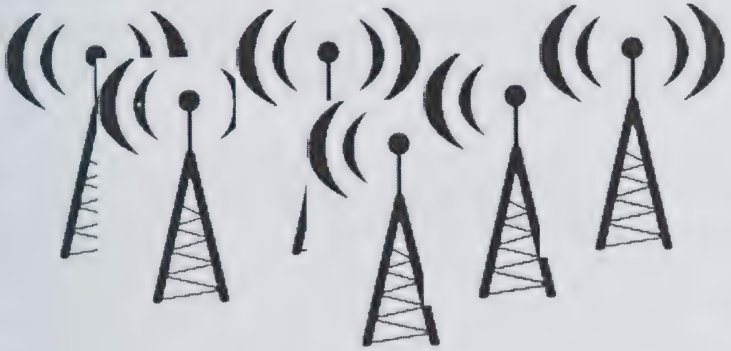
More **Discoveries and Parallels**

Both bear messages ... but for whom? The graffiti artist makes her or his mark, and the pirate radio operator transits her or his broadcast, whether or not an audience will come across their message. Perhaps both the railroad artist and the audio artist will delight some onlooker at a railroad crossing, or someone scanning through shortwave frequencies who suddenly hears music or an unexpected voice through the omnipresent static.

Both use a seemingly antiquated medium. Mainstream culture has people thinking that shortwave is dead. The reality is there are many radio listeners and amateur radio operators who know better. FM and AM radio are completely regulated by the FCC but shortwave is the forgotten territory just off the map, one that was just a few years ago was populated with thousands of radio stations from all over the planet. Reading about the tenacity and dedication of railroad artists recalls the drive and persistence of pirate radio operators. Pirates deal with complex transmitting equipment, uncooperative weather (most pirates broadcast outdoors), difficult signal propagation and potential harassment from the FCC to deliver their message and delight listeners. Railroad graffiti and pirate radio have been around for generations and, as long as there are creative souls, both will live on for the foreseeable future.

& now a quick word about ...

Teachers...
Just a bunch of over educated over paid union loving LIBERALS!
Join the republican war on academia
oldamericancentury.org



Licensed Broadcasting – An introduction to the amateur radio service

Pirate radio is what got me interested in shortwave. But, I have a serious and startling confession to make: in 2008, I became an FCC licensed amateur radio operator. I applied for and was given my own personal callsign – K1MOE. The irony of it all is, I have not yet broadcast 'legally' using my license because I don't have access to high frequency transmitting equipment!

What is Amateur Radio?

It's a way to talk to people around the world, or even orbiting the world; to send e-mail without any sort of internet connection, and to keep in touch with friends while you're driving around town. And it is also a very important communications system -- when cell phones don't work, regular phones don't work, the internet doesn't

work, ham radio works. When other systems are

More about Amateur Radio

down or overloaded, ham radio still gets the message through. Ham radio is a "hobby" (that's the fun part that gets most people interested and keeps them on the air) But it is also a "service" - a vital service that has saved lives again and again when regular communication systems failed.

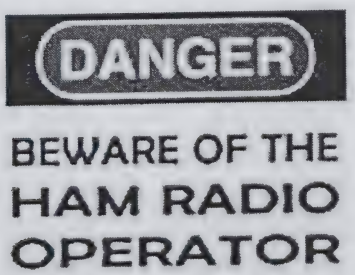
On September 11 2001, it was ham radio that kept New York City agencies in touch with each other after their command center was destroyed. When hurricanes like Katrina, Rita and Wilma or tornadoes or floods knock out other communications, ham radio provides vital life-and-death capabilities. But 99% of the time, hams do what they do because it's just plain fun.

This unique mix of fun, public service and convenience is the distinguishing characteristic of Amateur Radio. Although hams get involved in the hobby for many reasons, they all have in common a basic knowledge of radio technology, regulations and operating principles, demonstrated by passing an examination for a license to operate on radio frequencies known as the "Amateur Bands." These are reserved by the Federal Communications Commission for use by hams at intervals from just above the AM broadcast band all the way up into extremely high

Who's the Typical Ham?

Amateur Radio operators come from all walks of life. They are all ages, sexes, income levels and nationalities. But whether they prefer Morse code on an old brass telegraph key through a low-power transmitter, voice communication on a hand-held radio or computer messages transmitted through satellites, they all have an interest in what's happening in the world, and they use radio to reach out.

Nobody knows when Amateur Radio operators were first called "Hams," but we do know that Amateur Radio is as old as the history of radio itself. Not long after Guglielmo Marconi, an Italian experimenter, transmitted the Morse code letter "s" from Poldhu, on the southwest tip of England, to St. John's, Newfoundland, in 1901, amateur experimenters throughout the world were trying out the capabilities of the first "spark gap" transmitters. By 1914, amateur experimenters were



communicating nation-wide, and setting up a system to relay messages from coast to coast. In 1927, the precursor agency to the FCC was created by Congress and specific frequencies were assigned for various uses, including ham bands.

Today, Hams have their own satellites, chat with space stations, bounce signals off the moon and are at the cutting edge of many technologies. Computers, digital systems, slow scan television, cross-band repeaters and concepts undreamed of just a few years ago are common in the ham community. While skills in Morse code are no longer required by the FCC to get a license, many hams still enjoy and use this older mode. But while the Morse code key may be on the desk, it is probably next to a modern, transistorized system capable of operating under the most extreme emergency conditions

What Are the Amateur Radio Bands?

Look at the dial on an old AM radio and you'll see frequencies marked from 535 to 1700 kilohertz. That's the AM commercial radio band. Imagine that band extended out many thousands of kilohertz, and you'll have some idea of how much additional radio spectrum is available for amateur radio bands. It is here you'll find aircraft, ship, fire and police communication, as well as shortwave stations, which are worldwide commercial and government broadcast stations from the U.S. and overseas. Amateurs are allocated ten basic "bands" (i.e. groups of frequencies) in the High Frequency range between 1800 and 29,700 kilohertz, and another seven bands in the Very High Frequency bands and Ultra High Frequency ranges, as well as Super High Frequency bands. Some of these ten bands are very small and some are rather large. Even though many Amateur Radio conversations may be heard around the world, given the right frequency and propagation conditions, Amateur Radio is basically two-way communication.

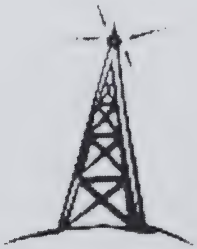
What are the Licenses?

The Technician class license is the entry-level license of choice for most new ham radio operators. To earn the Technician license requires passing one examination totaling 35 questions on radio theory, regulations and operating practices.

The license gives access to all Amateur Radio frequencies above 30 megahertz, allowing these licensees the ability to communicate locally and most often within North America. It also allows for some limited privileges on the shortwave bands used for international communications. The General class license grants some operating privileges on all Amateur Radio bands and all operating modes. This license opens the door to world-wide communications. Earning the General class license requires passing a 35 question examination. General class licensees must also have passed the Technician written examination.

The Amateur Extra class license conveys all available U.S. Amateur Radio operating privileges on all bands and all modes. Earning the license is more difficult; it requires passing a thorough 50 question examination. Extra class licensees must also have passed all previous license class written examinations.

Many publishers, including the American Radio Relay League, offer books, video programs and computer software to facilitate self-study for the three Amateur Radio licenses. In addition, many local Amateur Radio clubs offer regular classes.



Shortwave radio meets podcasting!!!

Every week, Ragnar Daneskjold creates a labor of love podcast about news from the pirate radio scene called The Pirate's Week. Ragnar reports on news from the world of AM, FM and a lot of shortwave. His podcast features listener loggings of broadcasts and off-air recordings of pirate stations. His show is also heard on some low-power FM stations, college stations, and relayed on shortwave by WBNY. You can download the Pirates Week podcast and catch up on all the latest info at www.piratesweek.info ... the most inclusive pirate site on the interwebs.

Ragnar agreed to an interview with your zinester ... listen up and be enlightened!

DJ F: Tell me about the origins of the Pirate's Week podcast

Ragnar: After reading a brief news story a few months previous, I sought out the new form of "broadcasting" named podcasting in late February of 2005. I initially signed up for three different shows. One of these shows was Slash Dot Review, which later became SDR News. This was a simple daily show that covered the postings on the online website slashdot. In the early days of podcasting there was a very "indie" feel to the medium, without the onerous weight of corporate broadcasting the medium was open to all who could garner an audience. Within a few days I convinced myself I could do a similar show to Andy McCaskey's SDR News.

More with Ragnar ...

I began the Piratesweek a couple weeks later in early March 2005. Only a few years previously I became aware of HF pirates and was actively broadcasting *Ragnar Radio* at the time. I used the same basic skills of audio recording and arranging on the computer that I was using for the pirate broadcasts. The podcast was a way I could contribute to the pirate community by reading posts found on the FRN and airing off air recordings. It was also a documentation of my personal education in what was still a relatively new hobby for me. I hoped to help those newer to the hobby as I explored and learned about free radio and the wider world of shortwave.

DJ F: What were the broadcasts of Ragnar Radio like? What frequencies were they broadcast on?

Ragnar Radio was active from around 2002 through 2006. Active mainly on 6955, 6950 and later on 6925. Being my first pirate radio station it was an experiment in musical and political programming. The early shows had a distinct libertarian flavor, the later show were more music oriented.

DJ F: You refer to the "pirate community" ... what do you consider to be the pirate community?

Ragnar: I like to think of the HF pirate radio broadcasters and listeners as a community. At its core it is a relatively small number of individuals who enjoy a creative and somewhat odd hobby. I don't want to be exclusionary but I define the community as those

individuals who broadcast on shortwave and the core group of DXers who log them and participate in online conversations on the various bulletin boards and chat rooms around the internet. Community, tribe, clan, or clique, however you want to describe it we're a group of people sharing a common interest, discussing and interacting on an ongoing basis.

DJ F: How is shortwave radio different from AM or FM and why (in your opinion) should people listen to shortwave?

Ragnar: Shortwave radio is very different than FM and even AM (medium wave) radio and the type of pirate radio differs on each. FM radio has the highest fidelity and the shortest propagation range, usually measured in only a couple of miles, or city blocks. FM is the best known by the general public and tends to be used by stations that want to garner a local, more main stream audience. There are far fewer pirate stations on the AM dial. AM is also local with a similar range to FM with a slightly reduced fidelity and is lesser known to the general public than FM. AM pirate radio has much fewer pirate broadcasters and is mostly the realm of hobbyists and low power enthusiasts. Shortwave is radically different than AM and FM. Most of the action of pirate shortwave is near the 40 meter band. Due to the propagation properties of this area of the band the effective range is measure in hundreds, and even thousands of miles. However shortwave has a low fidelity and is generally unknown to the general public. Pirate stations broadcast to a somewhat smaller audience that is spread out over a

large geographical area. This audience is willing to listen to stations that are sporadic in nature and may have weak signals competing with static and the odd propagation patterns inherent to shortwave. What makes listening to pirate radio on shortwave worth overcoming these obstacles is the creativity of the programming. Much of the programming of the shortwave pirates is carefully crafted audio art consisting
of music, comedy, spoken word and sampled bits creating highly creative audio that can be found nowhere else in radio.

brief bio pirated from Ragnar's website: An avid hunter, couch potato, shortwave and podcast listener, Ragnar spends his time walking back and forth between his radio and his TV.

DJ F:: Shortwave radio really is the final frontier in terms of speaking out for freedom of speech. The federal government and FCC doesn't seem to care about shortwave frequencies any more ... they should revert back to the people to whom they rightfully belong - US.

The Evolution of Seldom Heard Radio with DJ Frederick

As a child in the late 1960s I spent many hours exploring my father's "cavern" in the basement of our small house. His electronics repair shop smelled of must and damp and solder. His work benches were strewn with the chassis of TVs & radios, and mysterious tubes of all sizes. At some point in my early childhood – I think it was around the age of eight, I simultaneously started collecting 7" vinyl records (the first record I ever bought was Atlantis by Donovan) and heard a Zenith shortwave radio which had been brought to my father for repairs. The booming audio and unfamiliar music and languages intrigued me, as did the static and strange noises between the stations. The airwaves were alive and even though people were broadcasting from across the world, it sounded like they were next door. There seemed to be hundreds of shortwave stations all up and down the radio dial.

This encounter with shortwave was unfortunately quickly forgotten as I focused on "dx'ing" (a term for distance listening) medium wave band (AM) radio stations in the US. I spent hours tuning in stations from as far away as Chicago, Baltimore, Detroit, Nashville, Canada and even Mexico. Around this time, my local AM station, WFEA, had a underground 60s pop and rock format and I listened every night my favorite DJ was on – Johnny Tripp. I was determined to hang out at

WFEA if I could. I rode the five miles across the river on my bike, and found that Johnny Tripp actually answered the door and talked to me! Years later I learned that my father had played country music on his guitar live on WFEA in the late 1930s before he was stationed in India during World War II and my mother had sang on WFEA with her high school glee club around the same time, though they didn't actually meet until 1952.

When I was eleven, twelve, and thirteen, my friends would play "DJ" by rigging homemade Radio Shack transmitters, or recording music and shows onto monolithic cassette or reel-to-reel tape recorders. Thus the seeds of Seldom Heard Radio were planted.

In the summer of 1977, I spent two hot summer months at the University of New Hampshire taking classes. Immediately I gravitated toward the radio station, WUNH, which I discovered was being run by a scruffy looking guy with a five day old beard who didn't talk much but would run in every few minutes to throw another record on the turntable. When I offered to help him out, he said yes --- I could play any music I wanted but had to play requests if anyone called. No problem! I felt like I had just been handed the keys to the kingdom. So listeners to 91.3 that summer were treated to my already eclectic taste in music --- From the Mars Hotel by the Grateful Dead ... Mike Oldfield's Tubular Bells ... Eat a Peach by the Allman Brothers ... Bob Dylan's Planet Waves ... the phone rang several times a day but not for requests ...

or just for playing music they couldn't hear on other stations. I was the luckiest teenager on the planet.

By 1978 I was thinking of college, work, work, and more work. I didn't have much to do with radio except for listening to WSLE, a freeform community station in Peterborough NH, where in the course of an hour one could hear local musicians, acoustic music, celtic, reggae, rock, and even classical and jazz. It was sweet bliss until WSLE was sold in 1981 and the format changed to … disco! There was so much outrage from listeners in New Hampshire and Vermont that a non-profit was formed, Concerned Citizens for Responsible Radio, to protest the sale and see what could be done to restore WSLE to its rightful "format". Legend has it that WSLE DJ Tim Tobin played "Stairway to Heaven" as his final song and drove away from the studio into the night, letting the turntable drift and all that could be heard on that frequency (92.1) was the steady 'click click click' of the record's spin out groove until the new station owner arrived the next morning.

Write to DJ Frederick at 36 West Main Street
Warner NH 03278

A note about WSLE ...

Just ran into a three year old blog entry by DJ Frederick concerning WSLE in Peterboro, NH. I was the night shift DJ with that station, from 1977 to early 1979. Joel Gray (Music Director) was morning drive, Tim Tobin (Program Director) was mid-day, and Ken McKay was afternoon drive time. Debra Budreaux (sp?) was the Station and Sales Manager and Fritz Weatherbee the News Director and personality in his own right. WSLE was the first of the true east coast Indie Stations. Yes, WNEW in NYC was the major metro rules ground-breaker, and later the Boston Phoenix station was incredible. However, the Boston station's format was clearly a knock off of what Tim Tobin put together at WSLE. I can remember doing the night show, many times, when a national artist would "stop by" his/her favorite east coast station, WSLE. Taj Mahal, Bonnie Raitt, Noel Paul Stookey, Dr. John, Jorma Kaukonen, George Thorogood, Bob Weir ... those jump to memory immediately, but there were MANY more incredible visits and experiences in that little studio in Southern N.H. It's nice to see that someone still remembers those halcyon early days of free-form radio, which didn't last long, but arguably formed some of the bedrock for today's web based stations, such as Folk Alley and Radio Paradise.

Travel Well friends,

Larry Knutson

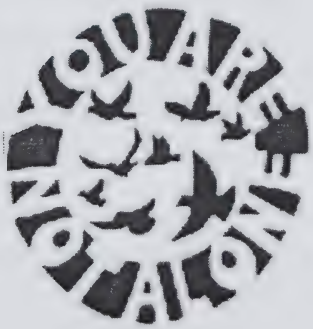
WSLE 1977-1979

The Shortwave Report with Dan Roberts

By Cassandra Roos

We've all had moments of aggravation with the news offerings in this country, particularly as the mainstream media landscape becomes ever more consolidated.

Even when you flip through reputable papers like the *New York Times* do you get the sense that you are only getting America's point of view? Are you curious about what international news our mainstream media skips altogether or how the same news events might be covered half way across the globe? Well you aren't alone...



More about the Shortwave Report with Dan Roberts

Progressives and curious people around the country want to get foreign news unfiltered. So how can ordinary people do this on the cheap? One option is shortwave radio. Until recently, I'd never heard of shortwave myself. When I think of radio, I mostly think of NPR, a smattering of great indie college stations, and then the drivel of right-wing talk radio and homogenous corporate rock stations.

But shortwave radio is sort of like the wild west of the dial. You can find anything on it. In addition to finding plenty of mountain-dwelling conspiracy theorists, American evangelist programming, static, and weird beeping sounds, you can pick up the widest range of global programming available in any medium. You can listen to everything from BBC World Service, Channel Africa, China Radio International, Kol Israel (Voice of Israel), Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, Laser Radio Latvia, Radio Afghanistan, Radio Cairo, Radio Finland, Radio Free Iraq, Radio Havana, Voice of Mongolia, Vatican Radio, BBC World Radio and Voice of America, the official broadcasting service of the U.S. government.

To figure out where to start, check out www.OutfarPress.com a short, summarized audio compilation of snippets of news from radio stations around the world. The programs are a

More about the Shortwave Report with Dan Roberts

mixed bag, though our intrepid and discriminating readers will come across detritus like a Cuban broadcast about the need for the world to rise up against American imperialism, the offerings are eclectic and fascinating.

OutfarPress.com is the project of Dan Roberts. Dan lives in a cabin which uses only solar energy in Mendocino County, California. He runs 65 feet of wire from one end of his house to the other and it is connected to a $1500 shortwave radio which can pick up stations from around the world. Some, like Radio Havana Cuba, are not available in the U.S. on the internet or through any other form at all.

Roberts has been creating his shortwave reports for about eight years now and he has elaborate audio equipment in his cabin that allows him to record international broadcasts, edit them together and create his weekly rebroadcast called the Dan Roberts Shortwave radio report. His report is currently run on 60 licensed US radio stations, not including pirate stations or international stations.

Roberts explains "basically most radical big international voices aren't on the internet... the American population thinks shortwave is something that happened a long time ago but shortwave has stayed popular in other countries."

More about the Shortwave Report with Dan Roberts

One of the reasons that shortwave radio has remained so popular outside of the U.S. is because, unlike the internet, it can be listened to with a cheap, compact and portable receiver (around $50) in rural areas, on the ocean, and in regions that have no internet access at all. But what exactly is shortwave radio? Shortwave radio signals are sent out differently from regular radio signals running on FM and AM. Shortwave signals are sent up into the Earth's ionosphere and bounce back skipping around the planet enabling people like Roberts to pick up broadcasts from thousands of miles away. Major uses of shortwave radio include amateur radio programs, utility stations transmitting information not intended for the public like weather reports for ships, international news broadcasting, domestic broadcasting in countries with widely dispersed populations, specialized naval or military broadcasts or so-called number stations. No one quite knows where number stations come from, but they are streams of seemingly random numbers, words or sounds. Some hobbyists believe that they are used by intelligence agencies to communicate with their agents.

More about the Shortwave Report with Dan Roberts

The shortwave radio form has inspired musicians like Stereolab and Wilco. The title of *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*, a recent Wilco album that samples from shortwave broadcasts, came from one of those shortwave broadcasts of random strings of numbers and words. The broadcasts that inspired Jeff Tweedy were culled from the Conet Project, a four-hour long collection of recordings from numbers stations.

But Roberts' passion isn't music but collecting international news stories that are making waves on other continents. He commented that it is a "bummer to me that our media is acting like it is insignificant...really amazing stuff is happening in South America and Latin America." He said he finds that it is still important to get another country's perspective, to hear what foreigners hear inside their countries, how stories are being presented, and what types of feelings these may generate towards Americans. As he puts it, "you can't really think globally if you only get media from the U.S." Domestic news organizations, guided at times by commercial interests, worry, Roberts says, about "what the corporation is going to say about this?" when debating whether or not to run a story.

Pirate Stations to Listen for on Shortwave:

The Crystal Ship

WBNY

The Voice of Next Thursday

WHYP

WMPR

MAC SHORTWAVE

Radio Ga-Ga

Northwoods Radio

KIPM

WEAK Radio

Radio Ronin

Captain Morgan

WLDJ

Wolverine Radio

CYOT

Barnyard Radio

& many others ... 6850—6975 kHz or 7450 kHz

Thoughts on "what is good radio?" ...

From the Third Coast Audio Festival's new Teachers' Guide to Audio Documentary, just out:

"Radio lives at the intersection of words, sound & imagination. Good radio doesn't merely tell a story; it takes the listener through an experience. Good radio carves deep impressions, and leaves vivid memories."

Keep Your Radio Free

SIGNALS # 3

Your words, images. Letters & thoughts could be included with the next issue

73s!